

Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1-10. (Cancelled)

11. (New) A method for providing long term local anesthesia comprising:

- a. Administering to a subject in need of such treatment a liposomal local anesthetic formulation for slow release of said slow release anesthetic formulation,
- b. Wherein said formulation is prepared by a dehydration-rehydration method, in which lyophilized liposomes encapsulating the local anesthetic are rehydrated by agitating in an aqueous medium followed by washing the rehydrated liposomes in an about 300-600 mM hyperosmotic saline solution.

12. (New) The method according to claim 1 wherein the local anesthetic is a member of the "caine" family.

13. (New) The method according to claim 12 wherein the member of the "caine" family is selected from the group

consisting of bupivacaine, lidocaine, ropivacaine, leverbupivacaine, procaine, chloroprocaine, benzocaine, etidocaine, mepivacaine, prilocaine, ciprocaaine, tetracaine, dibucaine, heptacaine, mesocaine, propanocaine, carbisocaine, and butacaine.

14. (New) The method according to claim 13 wherein the member of the "caine" family is bupivacaine.

15. (New) A method for preparing a liposomal drug having a high drug/lipid ratio, comprising the steps of:

- a. encapsulating the drug in liposomes;
- b. lyophilizing the liposomes;
- c. rehydrating the lyophilized liposomes by agitating in an aqueous medium; and
- d. washing the rehydrated liposomes in an about 300-600 mM hyperosmotic saline solution.

16. (New) The method according to claim 15 wherein the drug is a local anesthetic of the "caine" family.

17. (New) The method according to claim 16 wherein the member of the "caine" family is selected from the group consisting of bupivacaine, lidocaine, ropivacaine, leverbupivacaine, procaine, chloroprocaine, benzocaine, etidocaine, mepivacaine, prilocaine, ciprocaaine, tetracaine,

dibucaine, heptacaine, mesocaine, propanocaine, carbisocaine, and butacaine.

18. (New) The method according to claim 17 wherein the member of the "caine" family is bupivacaine.

19. (New) A liposomal local anesthetic composition having a high drug/lipid ratio, prepared by encapsulating the local anesthetic in liposomes, lyophilizing the liposomes, rehydrating the lyophilized liposomes by agitating in aqueous medium, and washing the rehydrated liposomes in hyperosmotic saline solution of about 300 mM to 600 mM.

20. (New) The composition according to claim 19 wherein the drug/lipid ratio is at least 0.33 mole/mole.

21. (New) The composition according to claim 19 wherein the local anesthetic is a member of the "caine" family selected from the group consisting of bupivacaine, lidocaine, ropivacaine, levebupivacaine, procaine, chloroprocaine, benzocaine, etidocaine, mepivacaine, prilocaine, ciprocaaine, tetracaine, dibucaine, heptacaine, mesocaine, propanocaine, carbisocaine, and butacaine.

22. (New) The composition according to claim 21 wherein the member of the "caine" family is bupivacaine.